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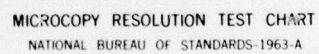
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TURKEY IN THE LATER 1970s

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23 Apr 76

The following view is based generally on information presented and opinions advanced by participants in the conference held on April 23, 1976.

It seems clear that the determining forces, in the middle and the long run, are economic and demographic. Turkey's first two five-year plans have produced reasonably good economic growth, with a significant increase in the Gross National Product. At the same time, the plans have been less successful in promoting rational development. The third five-year plan may be overambitious. The intention to focus on capital-intensive industries, which are also energy-intensive, risks aggravating the trade gap. To produce the desired results, there must also be greater development of the economic infrastructure (via labor-intensive projects as much as possible), improved public administration, development of selected backward regions, and a more rational educational system. And there should be a slowing of population growth.

The population problem will presumably increase in severity, in the absence of effective controls of growth, large-scale emigration, or startling economic advance. From a total of 13,600,000 in the first census in 1927 (perhaps somewhat undercounted) the population of Turkey has climbed to 40,000,000 in 1976. Per capita income, now only about TL 8,000 a year, has therefore grown much more slowly than the GNP. The 2.5% rate of population increase is lower than that in neighboring Muslim countries, but higher than that in the other European countries, and is too high for Turkey's needs. Regardless of population increase, the agricultural labor force remains at a constant figure; the excess workers then swell the ranks of the unemployed (already too large) and often migrate to cities. Urbanization increases. Something over 40% of the people now live in

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district or provincial centers, and it is predicted that Turkey may soon become 75% urban. Urban worker population, and unemployed worker population, will certainly grow. Many of these individuals are ambitious, and upwardly mobile; gecekondü ex-peasants want their sons, even daughters, to attend universities. A growing urban discontent may be expected among laborers who are unemployed or underemployed, among clerks without jobs, among lawyers without cases. If the gap between rich and poor widens too far, if trickle-down no longer works, the GNP increases may be meaningless. Birth control efforts so far have had little effect. How to get family planning accepted in the Turkish-Muslim social context is perhaps an insoluble puzzle. The force that has worked elsewhere to slow the rate of population growth is a rise in the standard of living. If this is the only effective method, it means that Turkish economic development is of primary importance for prosperity, domestic tranquillity, and perhaps even international tranquillity.

It is difficult to forecast the short-run political future. If one compares the 1973 elections and the partial election of 1975 it is obvious that the vote for the two major parties, the Justice Party and the Republican Peoples Party, increased notably; they garnered 80% of all votes cast in 1975, up from 62% of all 1973 votes. It also seems obvious that the Justice Party gains are in most areas proportional to the losses of the Democrat Party, which is declining rapidly, while the National Salvation Party managed to survive despite losses, and the National Movement (or Action) Party continued small and essentially unchanged with 1 to 4% of the vote, depending on region. The 1975 election represents less fragmentation of vote, and more polarization. Whether the JP or the RPP can win a clear majority in the next election is doubtful. There may be a bare possibility that the RPP might do so, as population in the urban centers, where

the party has special appeal, grows. But the popular attraction exerted by Bülent Ecevit is probably somewhat less than it was after the Cyprus invasion in 1974, when he was in power rather than out of government, and his position is now somewhat more awkward. A more likely guess is that the next elections will produce no majority party, that there will be coalition governments as there were in 1961 to 1965, and that this will mean some governmental weakness and indecisiveness.

Open intervention by the military is always possible. But it is not desired by the military themselves. They do not want to take control of government again. In this attitude both Demirel and Ecevit presumably concur; they do not want the military in power, and realize that civilian politicians have some leverage because of this military reluctance to stage a coup. The military still have a position of power, however, reluctant as they may be to act openly. The special courts containing military members as well as civilians, which exist now after the lifting of martial law, and the revision of habeas corpus, give them influence. They will not allow revision of the Yassiada verdicts. They remain in the background.

Turkish foreign relations are obviously much affected by the domestic economic and political climate. Yet the bases of Turkish foreign policy -- complete independence and territorial integrity -- are not now threatened by any other state. Why does Turkey act so beleaguered in the absence of major external enemies? A partial answer may be found in turning the question around: has Turkey major external friends? Among her immediate neighbors (Greece, Bulgaria, USSR, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Cyprus) there are probably no major friends except Iran. Farther away, perhaps Libya and some of the western European countries count as major friends. But none was in the recent position of the United States as a supporter of Turkey, and the shock of the American aid cut-off after the occupation of northern Cyprus

Presumably a new, lower, quieter level of American-Turkish relations is being sought and may now be in the process of achievement. The aid level of the 1950's and early 1960's, the obviousness of the American presence, the closeness in political relations, cannot and probably should not be recreated. If Turkey has coalition governments, must contend with left and right domestic radicalism, and exhibits a steady or rising nationalist consciousness, the government will always find it difficult to make concessions to foreign interests; its room for maneuver is limited. There is, furthermore, still an underlying suspicion, remaining from the Ottoman days of capitulations and great power politics in the Eastern Question, of what Atatürk and İnönü called "servitudes" imposed from abroad; political, economic, or judicial restrictions of complete Turkish sovereignty. Yet Turkey seems less likely to be bellicose than was the Ottoman Empire. The Republic now has been at peace for fifty years, an unprecedented stretch of time in Turkish history (the operations in Korea and Cyprus not counting as wars) and has developed a tradition for the peaceful settlement of disputes. There is no dispute in which Turkey is now involved that is not susceptible to such settlement, providing there can be some room for give and take in negotiation. The proviso is important, but the possibilities are there.

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